What Do I Do Next?
Resources for Small Archives

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HCI-PSAR Project Surveyors
Bucks County Symposium
October 2, 2014
• I added to an existing collection.
• I received a new collection.
• I want to process a collection.
• I want to start a digitization project.
• I want to establish a collecting policy.
• I want to learn more about archival theory!

What do I do next?
Entire presentation is posted online at: http://hsp.org/hcipsar/resources
I added to an existing collection.

What do I do next?
Adding to an existing collection

Update your own records.

➔ Remember that our finding aids are just a snapshot. YOU are the authority.
Adding to an existing collection

To update a finding aid on PACSCL site before April 2016, contact Sarah Leu (sleu@hsp.org)

At end of HCI-PSAR (April 2016), we will announce a new contact for you, probably at UPenn.

We will need to know the following information about your new materials:

• Extent (size in inches)
• Dates (if outside current range)
• Description (content, format, subjects)
I received a new collection

What do I do next?
I received a new collection

Update your own records.

→ Remember that our finding aids are just a snapshot. YOU are the authority.
I received a new collection

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→ Follow the format of the collections descriptions in your HCI-PSAR report
HCI-PSAR Finding Aid Worksheets

http://hsp.org/hcipsar/resources:
• Word version (DOC)
• Excel version (XLS)
Worksheet: Creating a Basic Finding Aid for an Archival Collection

This worksheet was created by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen in 2011-2014 as part of the Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (http://bsp.org/hcipsar), a project of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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<th>Finding aid author:</th>
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<td>Repository:</td>
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<td>Collection title:</td>
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<td>Creator:</td>
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<tr>
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Microsoft Excel (XLS) worksheet

- Inventory list option
- Automatically formatted for PACSCL website
I want to process a collection.

What do I do next?
What is processing?

Rehousing, Arranging, and Describing an archival collection
Rehousing - Basics

- Storage enclosures should be archival grade, acid free
- Large papers should be stored flat, not folded or rolled
- Papers in boxes should be properly supported, neither bulging nor slumping

WARNING!!!
FRAGILE PHOTOS!
DON'T PUT ANYTHING ON TOP!!
Rehousing - Supplies

- Established archival suppliers include:
  - Gaylord Brothers
  - Hollinger Metal Edge
  - University Products

Record carton (aka Paige box)

Flat boxes (aka oversized boxes, clamshell boxes)

Document boxes (aka Hollinger boxes, flip-top boxes)
Storage Tips

- To label boxes, purchase foil-backed labels
  - Regular office labels will fall off in 10-20 years
- Store boxes at least 6” off floor
- Choose metal shelving – avoid wood
  - Check discount restaurant suppliers for sturdy metal shelving
- Check Craigslist for architecture firms discarding flat files
Arrangement

- Item vs. Collection
- Provenance and original order
- Hierarchical organization and description
Item vs. Collection

Dear Chas:
Yours,
Chas.

Dear John:
Yours,
John.

Dear Chas:
Yours,
John.

Dear John:
Yours,
Chas.

All images from http://openclipart.org
**Provenance and Original Order**

- **Provenance**: keep documents grouped into collections by creator

- **Original order**: respect original order established by creator *[note: rule doesn’t extend to original DISorder]*

Images from [http://openclipart.org](http://openclipart.org)
Hierarchical Organization and Description

**Homer Simpson papers, 1987-2014**

Series I. Family papers
   Subseries A. Letters from Marge
   Subseries B. Bart and Lisa report cards

Series II. Work papers
   Subseries A. Nuclear Power Plant
      Folder: Paychecks
      Folder: Probation warnings
   Subseries B. Mr. Plow
      Folder: Receipts and invoices
      Folder: Commercial planning and script

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How to Parse Series

Follow the existing organizational scheme if it makes sense

- **Document type**
  - **Series:** Correspondence, Scrapbooks, Financial records

- **Period or phase**
  - **Personal papers series:** Education, Military, Career
  - **Business records series:** Miller Co., Miller & Sons, Ark & Miller

- **Department or person**
  - **Business records series:** CEO, Sales department, Finance office
  - **Family papers series:** Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa
When cataloging, start by creating a record for each COLLECTION as a whole!

Adding lower-level description is optional depending on the complexity and importance of the collection

- Try the finding aid worksheets at http://hsp.org/hcipsar/resources
I want to digitize materials.

What do I do next?
Permissions

- Ensure that you have the right to copy/distribute the image before you put it online!
  - Check your donor form. If your existing deed of gift doesn’t have a copyright release, consider inserting it for the future.
- Is the content in the public domain? If so, state that it is. If not, include a disclaimer.
Scanning

- Scanner ideally with low platen temperature
- 400 dpi, 24-bit color, TIFF
- Keep a master unedited copy
  - Plus edited, smaller, access copies if desired
- Sufficient and safe storage space
  - At least two master copies (unedited) stored in different buildings
- Establish file naming conventions
Programs

- Omeka
- ViewShare
- PastPerfect
Free for basic, low-cost for enhanced features.

They can host the website for you (for a fee).

Good for online exhibitions with pictures and text.

http://omeka.net
Free.

Good for analyzing data and making different types of visualizations (map, timeline, chart, list) that you can embed on your website.

http://viewshare.org
$870 + $445 for online plug-in
Includes hosted site.
Integrated with PastPerfect catalogs.

http://museumsoftware.com/
I want to establish a collecting policy.

What do I do next?
What is a collecting policy?

Acquisition Policy

n. ~ “An official statement issued by an archives or manuscript repository identifying the kinds of materials it accepts and the conditions or terms that affect their acquisition.”

--Richard Pearce-Moses, A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology
Why is a collecting policy important?

- Keep your institution’s collection focused
- Tactfully refuse unwanted donations
- Save storage space
- Keep a diverse group of staff/board/volunteers on the same page
What should be in my policy?

- What geographic region will you collect?
- What time period will you collect?
- Are there any subject areas that you will specialize in?
- Is there anything you will not collect? (size, format, subject area, etc.)?

What other repositories might have overlapping collecting areas?
Look for samples to emulate

• Look on the websites of large archives or museums you admire

• Ask peer (small) institutions to see theirs

http://hsp.org/collections/about-our-collections/collection-scope
I want learn more!

What do I do next?
Stay in touch for future HCI-PSAR events!!!

http://hsp.org/hcipsar/resources
Highlighted Resources

- Books to consider purchasing:

- Connecting to Collections Online Community

- Preservation resources
  - Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts
  - Northeast Document Conservation Center